



LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES

April 13, 2011

BOARD PRESENT: Amir, Bailey, Brodsky, Bryant, Dickerson, J. Lewis, O. Lewis, Neuman, Watts

STAFF PRESENT: Parker Hamilton, Director; Barbara Webb, Chief, Collection and Technology Management; Regina Holyfield-Jewett, Recording Secretary

GUESTS: Bruce Goldensohn, Gaithersburg LAC; Ellen Berman, Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Inc.

The Library Board meeting was convened by Chair Brodsky at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Minutes from the March 9 meeting were approved with one correction.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

As a part of National Legislative Day in May, Otto Lewis has been invited to visit Congressman Van Hollen with Kay Bowman and Judy Levy.

Whole Foods has moved from their location in Congressional Plaza to a new location. Nancy Benner, Agency Manager for Rockville Memorial Library, is featured in their new marketing booklet.

PRESENTATION:

Technology Survey Results – Barbara Webb

- Last November, the Technology Survey was conducted as a follow up to the Customer Satisfaction Survey.
 - From the 2008 Customer Satisfaction Survey, there were two areas that customers felt needed improvement – programming and technology.
 - The follow up Technology Survey was conducted in an effort to understand our customers' concerns.
- There were more than 1073 participants.
- How was the survey accessed?
 - Library PC 6%
 - Library Wireless 1.6%
 - **Home PC 71.5%**
 - School/Work PC 18.7%
 - Other 2.2%
- Do you have access to a PC at home?
 - **Yes 96.4%**
 - No 3.6%
- Do you Have Access to PC at School/Work?
 - **Yes 74.6%**
 - No 10.7%
 - Other 14.7% retired, work at home, not a student, etc.

- Purpose in Using Library PC.
 - Accessing Internet on Public PCs 24%
 - **Finding item in library catalog 61.4%**
 - Using PC for Word or Excel 5.7%
 - Printing/Saving Files 9.4%
 - Checking/Sending Email 16.9%
 - Searching Library Databases 28%
 - Did not come to use PC 31.4%
 - Other 5%
- How often have you used a library PC to access resources?
 - Every Day or Most Days 3.5%
 - At Least Once a Week 9.4%
 - 1-3 Times/Month 25.9%
 - **Less than Once a Month/More than Once/Year 35.3%**
 - Once a Year or Less 15.3%
 - Never 10.7%
- At which branch do you use a library PC?
 - Davis 9.4%
 - Germantown 8.3%
 - Rockville 8.3%
 - Quince Orchard 8.2%
 - Bethesda 6.5%
 - Olney 5.4%
 - Silver Spring 5.1%
 - Wheaton 6.5%
 - White Oak 5.5%
 - All the other branches had less than 5%.
- How long do you have to wait for a library PC?
 - **Never Have to Wait 45.6%**
 - Less than 15 Minutes 36.1%
 - Less than 30 Minutes 14.7%
 - Between 1-2 Hours 2.8%
 - More than 2 Hours 0.8%
- Have you needed help with . . .
 - Using the Library PCs 23.2%
 - Using the Library's Copy Machines 19.5%
 - Using a Flash Drive 6.4%
 - Printing or Saving Files 13.5%
 - Finding a Specific Website 6.2%
 - **Finding an Item in Catalog 52%**
 - Searching a Database 18.2%
 - Using Word or Excel 3.5%
 - Other 19.5%
 - Example of "Other" – wifi problems, guidance on downloading, etc.
- What mode of assistance?
 - **Sought Staff Assistance 86.2%**
 - Looked for Information in Books or Materials 5.1%
 - Took an Online Tutorial 3.7%
 - Sent an Email 2.6%
 - Other 12.2%
- Was that helpful?
 - **Yes 88.6%**
 - No 11.4%

- Suggestions for new technology?
 - Yes 41.5%
 - No 58.5%
- Zipcodes
 - 20878 Gaithersburg 76 responses
 - 20850 Rockville 63
 - 20854 Potomac 63
 - 20852 Rockville 56
 - 20817 Bethesda 54
 - 20910 Silver Spring 53
 - 20901 Silver Spring 49
 - 20902 Silver Spring 49
- Age of participants.
 - Under 18 5.8%
 - 18-34 13.2%
 - 35-49 22.9%
 - **50-64 39.4%**
 - 65+ 18.7%
- One big revelation from the survey is that most customers do not know what services Libraries offer.
- Some comments from the survey:
 - Staff is the best resource because they can ask customers questions to find out what they need.
 - Library staff are often mystified by the problems that come up. All those old librarian ladies that work there don't know anything about technology.
 - The Catalog is hard to use; hard to search.
 - Need more technological savvy staff working in the library.
 - No more technology – purchase more books.
 - More e-books.
 - Restore hours before investing in what might be considered luxury items.
 - Libraries need to find a way to disseminate information regarding the full extent of the services they provide.
 - Cut back staff and upgrade technology.
 - Sixty-two responses suggested that there be a smartphone app for the catalog. [One is now available for iPad, iPhone and iPod users.]
 - There were 45 requests for more e-books.
 - Need a mobile app for accessing the catalog, renewing books, etc.
 - Have the catalog give a customer more information about the book prior to checkout.
 - Scrap the catalog software.
 - Find a way to make Kindles compatible with library e-books download. [This cannot be done because Amazon uses proprietary software.]
 - Have self-check in stations just like the self-check out stations.
 - Have scholarly databases. [We do have these.]
 - Consider an adult only area.
 - Swap Sirsi for Polaris or something with more functionality.
- The slowness of the catalog is due in part to customers hitting the back button instead of “new search”, this throws the system off.

Question: What is your take away from all of this?

Answer: The mobile app - which we knew people were interested in having. We now have it; it came free with our Sirsi package. The other take away was more e-books which we knew as well. We also heard there needs to be more training of staff on technology. There is also a need to educate customers about our services.

Question: Has there been any information from the ALA task forces?

Answer: No

There are a couple of vendors, besides Overdrive, that may be offering e-books. The Council of Governments (COG) libraries are discussing e-books.

Question: A few years ago some branches had technology staff who they depended on to answer technology related questions. Is this still the case?

Answer: It is in the performance plans of all branch staff that they must have a certain skill set level regarding technology. There are also technology checklists and competencies. There is a mindset that a technology question is not a true reference question. Because we are losing staff due to reduction in force, we are losing those staff who are versed in technology.

The survey results will be shared with staff; this is what our customers are saying about us and this is what we are doing about it.

Barbara Webb will be invited to share this information at a couple of LAC meetings

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

A press release will go out tomorrow regarding the mobile app that will allow iPad, iPod and iPhone users access to our catalog. This app was included with MCPL's Sirsi package. The FOL gave MCPL \$8K to buy Boopsie software which will allow BlackBerry and other smartphone users access to our catalog.

Tomorrow, April 14, Libraries is before the **HHS Council Committee** at 2 p.m., 3rd floor conference room of the Council Office Building. Libraries legislative analyst has outlined the history of the Department's cuts and is making some recommendations for add backs. She believes that the Neighborhood model should have additional staff and feels cuts in Central Administration staff are severe and should be monitored. She will also make some recommendation regarding the Olney impact staff. If there is money, MCPL would like it to be put on the reconciliation list for Libraries. Council members are still asking to hear from Library advocates. May 2 is the scheduled date for the second session.

This week is **National Library Week**. During this time, the Department is conducting its Customer Satisfaction Survey. For benchmarking purposes, it mirrors the 2008 survey. By the end of the summer, the raw data should be compiled and compared to 2008 data. Also, customers are being asked to "Tell Us Your Story." These stories will be collected and used as information for Council.

The kickoff for this year's **Summer Reading program** will be at Aspen Hill Library on June 18 at 11:00 a.m. The Department is participating with the State program. MCPL's program and the State program met in middle. Many parts of the program will take place online. The reduction in staff has limited the use of volunteers for the program.

Starting tomorrow **Letters of Intent** will be delivered to 179 employees. Only 38 positions will be involved if the budget goes through as currently recommended, but everyone in affected classes will receive the letter. Final decisions will not be known until after Council makes their final decision and will be based on seniority. Almost all the classes in the Library Department were affected.

Question: If the economic situation changes, will those who have been let go be able to come back?

Answer: There is something called recall rights. It is based on "being made whole."

Robyn Watts stated that she will be personally affected by the letters that will be coming out, but her service to Libraries goes beyond what is happening to her personally.

Richard Bryant noted that he has sat on interview committees that hired about 10% of the current employees. He offers comfort to those who are being affected.

NEW BUSINESS:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

The **pot luck** was fantastic. All Council members, with the exception of George Leventhal, attended and stayed and answered the hard questions. Library advocates were there wearing orange. There were inferences that there was money that would be put on the reconciliation list for Libraries; this is a turn from last year. During Chair Brodsky's testimony that evening, he gave a signal and all the advocates stood up and raised their signs; this was a very powerful moment.

The Consent Calendar is on May 9 and the reconciliation list vote is after that. Board members were asked to let the LACs know that everyone did a good job, but now it needs to be pushed over the finish line. It is important to keep this issue in front of the Council.

Question: Any word from the State regarding the budget?

Answer: The Library Capital Project was cut by \$1M; it is now \$4M.

Jennifer Hughes is the new acting director for the Department of Permitting Services (DPS). Ms. Hughes is a former specialist assistant to the County Executive. She has brought new energy to that department; some permits for which the Department has been waiting are finally being processed. Once all the permits have been received, the construction on the **Gaithersburg renovation** can begin. It usually takes eighteen months to get a permit. Some final decisions are expected by the end of this week. After which, Rita Gale will contact the Gaithersburg community and LAC and then post the information on the website.

There has been some vandalism at the Gaithersburg library. There were some concerns that the same would happen at the **Olney branch**. The Department of Police has asked permission to use the Olney Library building to do some training. The Department agreed; hopefully, this activity in the building will deter vandalism.

LAC INFORMATION:

Board and LAC Activities Committee (J. Lewis, Neuman, Riccardi, Sheriff-Merchant)

During the last committee meeting, the application and rating sheet were revised. Any mention of dates was taken out; dates and deadlines were put in the cover letter. Board members will discuss the awards with the LACs during upcoming meetings. The deadline for submission is May 2. A reminder will be sent to the Agency Managers. At the end of the award process, an evaluation will be conducted.

Along with its award role, the committee would also like to energize the LACs, work to boost LAC membership and mentor new Board members.

Question: What is the Board members' role in the awards process?

Answer: Applications have gone out to the LACs and branch managers. Board members should send an email or call the LAC chairs to remind them about the awards and to find out if they have any questions. At the LAC meetings, take the opportunity to explain the process again. The liaisons are also responsible for completing the application.

FOL funds will be used to purchase the awards.

LAC Applications

The LAC member nominations were approved unanimously.

LAC UPDATES (Liaison Reports)

Former Board member Althea Grey-McKenzie attended the last **Aspen Hill LAC** meeting. She was a major help in determining how to address the role of the LAC. A meeting has been planned to sit down with the LAC chair and go over the revised Handbook.

Silver Spring LAC is using the contacts they made at Council while working on the pedestrian bridge to advocate for no more cuts. Their message will include that the whole system needs an infusion not just Silver Spring. They have begun contacting the civic associations about what is going on with Libraries.

Bethesda Library will celebrate Gay Pride Month in June which will include a performance by Gay Men's Chorus. The funding is from the Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Inc.; there is an endowment that funds programs for the gay community.

Chevy Chase LAC has volunteers coming in to help with computers.

The **Correctional Facilities LAC** had a meeting on March 23 and seems to be energized by the new manager, Andrea Castrogiovanni. Ms. Castrogiovanni is looking for ways to promote the library's services and let the general public know what MCPL does there.

Poolesville LAC is having their poster contest and is planning to come to the June 3 event. They will also be involved in Poolesville Day in the fall.

Germantown LAC has a meeting next week.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Bruce Goldensohn, Gaithersburg LAC, expressed concern regarding the renovation of the Gaithersburg Library. He reported that it is very disturbing to get barraged by questions about why the Gaithersburg Library building looks just the way it did when it closed in May. He questioned why the community had not been informed about the delay and its cause. How can the permit process on an approved and funded facility take this long? He is also concerned that there has only been one communication from the LAC chair regarding this issue and that the LAC has not been involved in finding out why the renovation has been delayed. Some of his questions were answered by the Director in her report.

Director Hamilton assured Mr. Goldensohn that the information regarding the Gaithersburg renovation would be sent to the LAC chair and then posted on MCPL's website. She also encouraged him to contact David Dise, Director of the Department of General Services and Jennifer Hughes, Acting Director for DPS.

The Town of Gaithersburg will be holding its annual book festival on May 21 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Last year over fifty authors participated.

Tomorrow at Strathmore Hall, 11:30 a.m., the FOL will host a Literary Luncheon with Steve Roberts, husband of Cokie Roberts and author of *My Fathers' Houses*.

The FOL gave cakes to all the branches/units in recognition of National Library Week.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

B. Parker Hamilton